



## DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

### News Release

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GOVERNOR

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### **DECLINE IN RETAIL TRADE JOBS CONTRIBUTE TO MARCH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF 3.4 PERCENT**

HONOLULU- The Hawaii State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations announced today that the statewide unemployment rate in March was 3.4 percent, an increase of 0.4 percentage point over February's unemployment rate of 3.0 percent. The rise in unemployment was significantly due to the loss of 300 jobs in the retail industry.

On the positive side, the total number of non-agricultural jobs in the state increased over-the-month by 2,100, expanding to 566,900. Hawaii's labor force in March was comprised of 572,300 employed and 19,900 unemployed.

In contrast to Hawaii's unemployment rate, the national unemployment rate declined over-the-month, dropping from 6.4 percent in February to 6.2 percent in March. During the past

(more)

four months, Hawaii's unemployment rate remained lower than the national unemployment rate by more than two percentage points.

"We are pleased that our unemployment rate remains significantly lower than the national average especially in light of current world events," said Nelson Befitel, Director of Labor and Industrial Relations. "It is especially encouraging that we have not sustained any significant job loss in visitor related industries."

Overall, visitor related industries saw a small amount of growth of .1%. Air transportation and retail trade saw job losses of .5%, respectively. The increase of jobs in food services, accommodations, and transportation/warehousing by .1% to .8% helped offset the retail and air transportation job losses, with the food service industry having the most growth with the addition of 400 jobs.

State education rose by 900 jobs, primarily due to a seasonal increase in casual hires and student workers in the University of Hawaii system. Construction, and the combined administrative, support, and waste management sector, each expanded by 300 jobs.

The remaining industrial sectors showed little change in the number of jobs.

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## UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (not seasonally adjusted)

	MAR 2003	FEB 2003	MAR 2002
<b>STATE</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>4.3</b>
<b>HONOLULU*</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>4.0</b>
<b>HAWAII COUNTY</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>5.3</b>
<b>KAUAI</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>
<b>MAUI COUNTY</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Maui Island</b>	3.4	3.1	4.5
<b>Molokai</b>	8.0	6.2	6.8
<b>Lanai</b>	1.6	2.4	3.3
<b>U. S.</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>

\* City & County of Honolulu

## COMPARATIVE RATES - U. S. AND HAWAII

